

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
BEFORE MEETING WITH WEST AFRICAN LEADERS
ON EBOLA

CABINET ROOM

10:45 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I want to welcome Presidents Sirleaf, Koroma and Condé. The United States has a long partnership with Liberia and Sierra Leone and Guinea -- partnerships that prove to be critical in the fight against Ebola. We're here to assess progress today and to look ahead.

We begin by noting the incredible losses that took place in all three countries. More than 10,000 people have died from Ebola -- men, women and children. On behalf of the American people, we want to express our deepest condolences to the families and recognize how challenging this has been for all the countries involved.

Under extraordinary circumstances, the people of these three countries have shown great courage and resolve, treating and taking care of each other, especially children and orphans. The United States has been proud to lead an international effort to work with these three countries in a global response.

Last week, there were fewer than 40 new cases, so we've seen major progress. In Liberia right now, there are zero cases. In Sierra Leone and Guinea combined, there were fewer than 40 new cases last week and that's around the lowest number in a year. Now we're focused on a shared goal, and that is getting to zero. We can't be complacent. This virus is unpredictable.

We have to be vigilant, and the international community has to remain fully engaged in a partnership with these three countries until there are no cases of Ebola in these countries. Health systems also have to be rebuilt to meet daily needs -- vaccines for measles, delivering babies safely,

treating HIV/AIDS and malaria. And with our Global Health Security Agenda, we intend to do more to prevent future epidemics.

So the Ebola epidemic has been also an economic crisis. That's part of the reason why these three presidents are here. They're going to be meeting with a number of the multilateral institutions -- the IMF and World Bank here in Washington. There's the challenge of restoring markets and agricultural growth, promoting investment and development. So I'm going to be looking forward to hearing from them on how the United States can stand shoulder to shoulder with them to work hard to take this crisis and turn it into an opportunity to rebuild even stronger than before: To strengthen administrative systems, public health systems, to continue the work that they've done in rooting out corruption, reinforcing democratic institutions -- all of which will be the foundation stones for long-term progress and prosperity.

So Madam President, Mr. Presidents, we are very grateful for the hard work that you've done. We're proud to partner with you and we intend to see this through until the job is done.

Thank you, everybody.